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Letter dated 5 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 5 July 2018, addressed to you by the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, İsmet Korukoğlu (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 5 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the letter dated 2 July 2018 addressed to you by the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mustafa Akıncı.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its enclosure could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) İsmet **Korukoğlu**
Representative

Enclosure

It has been brought to my attention that the Greek Cypriot Leader, Nikos Anastasiades, recently penned a letter dated 25 June 2018 addressed to the members of the United Nations Security Council regarding the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). In response to certain allegations in the said letter, I deem it necessary to set the record straight and share with you the views and expectations of the Turkish Cypriot side regarding the matter at hand.

At the outset, it must be underlined that the Turkish Cypriot side has been cooperating with UNFICYP in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation, since its inception in 1964 in the face of the atrocities committed against the Turkish Cypriot community. Although the presence of UNFICYP has contributed to the stability on our island through its initial mandate after more than half a century of its operation in Cyprus, it is imperative for the United Nations Security Council to seriously reconsider and evaluate the mandate of this mission in the light of fundamental changes in the circumstances, such as the opening of crossing points between the two sides and the like.

Notwithstanding our cooperation and good relations, we shared in the past our views on the challenges and issues stemming from the operations of UNFICYP on our island. First and foremost, while it is stated in the "Brahimi report" (A/55/305-S/2000/809) that the consent of all local parties must be sought for a United Nations peacekeeping operation to be efficient and successful, UNFICYP continues to work with the Turkish Cypriot authorities without a legal basis, despite our repeated calls to establish one. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our readiness to conclude a document with the United Nations addressing all aspects of our relations with UNFICYP and setting the legal basis. Furthermore, contributions to the budget of UNFICYP by the Greek Cypriot administration and the Government of Greece, despite the fact that they are sides to the conflict in Cyprus, is a blatant example of conflict of interest and a practice which has been discontinued in all other United Nations missions in the world.

As also highlighted by the United Nations Secretary-General in all his recent reports, confidence-building and direct contact between the two communities on the island are vital for the success of efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot side has shown its readiness to implement the already agreed confidence-building measures, as well as the projects aimed at increasing communication and cooperation between the two sides. However, the Greek Cypriot side managed to hinder or prevent any such attempts to create direct contacts between the two communities by deferring almost all bi-communal matters to UNFICYP. While acknowledging the role that UNFICYP played in the past to facilitate such contacts, I would like to remind the Security Council that there is nothing preventing the two sides from directly cooperating in all aspects, especially in crisis management and humanitarian issues, as long as the necessary political will exists. Taking into account the fact that one day there will be no presence of UNFICYP in Cyprus, direct cooperation should also be encouraged by the United Nations itself without any delay. Therefore, the presence of UNFICYP should not be exploited by the Greek Cypriot side as a pretext to create obstacles regarding direct dealings between the two sides. I expect the Members of the Security Council to take this into consideration in assessing the future of UNFICYP.

Since my election in 2015, I have worked hard to achieve further convergences and carry the negotiation process to a successful conclusion. Through my determined stance and the unprecedented steps taken by the Turkish Cypriot side in the

negotiation chapters, we managed to bring the process to its climax phase in June 2017 with the "Crans-Montana" round of the Cyprus Conference. During the Conference, the Turkish Cypriot side, together with Turkey, decisively showed the flexibility required to reach a strategic agreement, which would have paved the way for further convergences in the remaining outstanding issues that are necessary for a final deal and going to simultaneous referendums thereafter. However, instead of reciprocating the steps taken and showing the necessary political courage and determination, the Greek Cypriot leadership only focused on shifting the blame, and as a result, this unique window of opportunity to solve the Cyprus problem was missed. Despite this, as has been referred to in the latest report of the Secretary-General on progress towards a settlement in Cyprus (see S/2018/610, para. 13), I took yet another unprecedented initiative on 30 April 2018, which, unfortunately, was not accepted by the Greek Cypriot leader.

The reluctance of Mr. Anastasiades to take the necessary steps aimed at a solution raises the question of whether the Greek Cypriot leadership was ready for a solution based on a bizonal, bicommunal federation with political equality of the two sides in the first place. Unfortunately, rather than preparing his community for the compromise steps that are necessary for a settlement, as per the call of the United Nations Secretary-General in all his recent reports, the Greek Cypriot leadership continues to demonize political equality of the two sides and the principle of effective participation in decision-making. In order for the efforts aimed at reaching a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem to succeed, there must be a mentality shift in the Greek Cypriot leadership, whereby they openly display their readiness to share power and prosperity and embrace the political equality of the two communities, which is a well-established United Nations parameter.

It must be remembered that the Turkish intervention took place as a legal response to the military coup d'état by Greece in Cyprus on 15 July 1974. In addition, systematic armed aggression against Turkish Cypriots since 1963 is also recorded in the United Nations archives. Therefore, Turkey's presence on the island should not be viewed as a means of aggression, but rather as a means to prevent aggression against Turkish Cypriots. In the face of these historical facts, rather than engaging in this kind of blame game, the Greek Cypriot leadership should focus on reaching a peaceful solution that will be mutually acceptable.

A similar mentality change is needed in the Greek Cypriot administration regarding how the hydrocarbons issue in Cyprus should be handled. In response to the allegations that Turkey has been the source of the escalation of tension in the Eastern Mediterranean, I would like to remind the Security Council of the repeated calls and proposals by the Turkish Cypriot side to establish a mechanism whereby the co-owners of the natural wealth around Cyprus, namely the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, would jointly decide on the management and future exploitation of these resources. Turkey has also very strongly supported these proposals aiming at creating cooperation between the two sides on the island. Therefore, it is the intransigent stance of the Greek Cypriot administration in refusing to cooperate with the Turkish Cypriots which is the actual reason for the escalating tension in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Rather than continuing their unilateral steps in this sphere, which aim to exclude Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, I remain convinced that the interdependence and mutual benefit that would arise from inclusive regional partnerships would significantly contribute to peace and stability in our region and would also create a more conducive atmosphere for a solution in Cyprus.

In the light of the above, it is imperative for the Security Council to ensure that the presence of UNFICYP in Cyprus after 54 years does not contribute to the status quo and that it conforms to the changes in the situation on the ground. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the mandate, as well as the level and the concept of the

presence of UNFICYP on the island should not be out of the question, since, in my view, any presence that creates a comfort zone for the Greek Cypriot side in Cyprus must be challenged.

In closing, I wish to reiterate my strong commitment and political will to reach a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Mustafa **Akıncı**
President